

**Abstract**

A method for treating inflammatory joint diseases by inhibiting cadherin-11 mediated cellular function using a cadherin-11 modulating agent is provided. Also provided are screening assays for identifying pharmaceutical lead compounds capable of modulating  
5 cellular functions of cadherin-11 such as cell proliferation, apoptosis, factor secretion, and binding of cadherin-11 to cadherin-11 counter-receptor inhibiting binding of cadherin-11 to its counter-receptor either in the context of a cell or in soluble form.